

# The New Recruit

WILLIAM T. SHARP

The new recruit has just entered a completely different phase of life in which he immediately becomes extremely insecure. He has no idea what is coming next, and this insecure feeling is so radically different from the security of the average American home that he suffers a considerable amount of anxiety until he is able to make an adequate adjustment to service life. He is no longer allowed to say what he pleases when he feels the urge to do so, and the resulting suppressed emotion often makes him irritable toward his fellow cohorts.

In the army we find representatives from every conceivable kind of homes. This is indeed an odd mixture. Here, our recruit observes types of personalities of which he is completely unfamiliar. He is forced to work, eat, and sleep with this personality mixture. The result of this is of vital importance. It produces a great understanding of the real substance of his country, and he emerges a more broad minded citizen. The rich and the poor all look alike in olive drab. For the first time in their lives, they are being treated alike. This makes the rich boy poor in pleasure and the poor boy rich with the feeling of equality.

In spite of all his hardships, he is a proud person. He has entered the noblest cause of his lifetime and he is justly proud. He learns to respect authority and take orders, which is entirely new for many of the recruits. This matter is very hard for most of the boys, for the average American youth enjoys shocking freedom from control throughout the greater part of adolescence. This freedom of thought does serve him well after he is adjusted to discipline,

as we find him very self reliant and courageous. It is a part of his heritage and he is determined to live up to the expectations of his superiors in rank as well as those of his family and friends.

The recruit also finds himself expressing pride for something about which he has never before been conscious; that is the pride for his home state. In groups of men from all sections throughout the country, this connection with the home state is something which gives each man a more distinct feeling of individuality. Here, each man begins to note with pride his own little native characteristics of his home state. He also begins to associate the different types of phonetics with their native state or section of the country. Notable among these is the native of Brooklyn. Here, he sees a unique interpretation of the English language. Unorthodox as it may seem, the boy from Brooklyn is just as confident that he is the typical American boy as is the boy from Texas with his slow, drawn out phrasing.

Now we begin to see a transformation of the recruit. He has assumed the attitude of a fighting man, with all his peculiarities. One of the best known ways of testing his morale is to register his complaints. His happiness and content is judged by the volume of his complaints. Most officers agree that if they can keep their men complaining, they are happy, but if the complaining stops, they alert themselves for trouble.

Traveling of our recruits molds certain characteristics in them also. They learn to appreciate more fully the broad expanse of land which they have been called upon

to protect, so they have a fuller understanding of their purpose.

Above all, he has an unconquerable determination to succeed. Our victories

over our foes the world over have been made possible by this determination of men, all of whom were at one time recruits.

## Mrs. Harper

MARJORIE LITTLE

Mrs. Harper came to keep house for Grandma many years ago when everyone in the family was ill. Grandma had about given up hope of any answers to her advertisements asking for help. One day a taxi drove up in front of the house. A small, bird-like woman hopped out. Her hair was pulled tightly back into a knot at the back of her neck. She wore a gray dress and a funny little hat perched on top of her head. She paid the driver and came lightly up the steps. Ever since then Mrs. Harper has belonged to us and we to her.

She pitched right in and took care of the whole family during that illness. When she opened Mother's door with a cheery word, Mother knew that everything was going to be all right. And so it was.

Mrs. Harper is one of the kindest-hearted people I have ever known. She will not stay still for more than a few minutes, for as long as there is something to be done, she will be doing it. Although she and Grandma seem to vie to see which can jump up from the table the quickest to get something that is missing, she wins at least half the time.

Mrs. Harper has a small face. Her cheeks are round and firm. A wrinkle around her chin makes her look like a ventriloquist's doll. Her hair is unusual for a little lady of over seventy, because it is thick and brown. She is so neat that she goes to the basement to comb it.

The last time we were at Grandma's she would say to my younger brother, "Well, you're just a *darlin'*." Then turning to one of us, she would say, "He's worth his weight in gold!" Of course, being a boy, Rob wishes nothing less than to be a "darlin'", but he would sheepishly grin each time and would pretend not to hear her. One morning she came up to me as I was looking out of the window and said, "It's a darlin' day, ain't it?"

Mrs. Harper is very unassuming. When the family sits in the living room in the evenings she is there, too. She sits quietly in a corner and knits. When a visitor comes, she will get up and start upstairs. One member of the family will urge her to return saying, "Oh, come in, Mrs. Harper. They want to see you, too." Sometimes she will not be persuaded, but often she will come back to sit in a corner. She says nothing, for a while. Suddenly she will sit on the edge of her chair and, fixing her twinkling brown eyes upon the visitor, will say, "I've got a question to ask you. Is Hitler really dead?" Or another time she may ask, "Well, now what do you think of them Japanese? Are we going to have more trouble with them or aren't we?" These are questions to which the visitor has no true answer, since he is only human, but he gives his own ideas while she listens attentively and puts in a word now and then. After this small bit